A REVIEW OF THE Affairs of *FRANCE*:

With Obſervations on TRANSACTIONS at Home.

Thurſday, November 1. 1705.

'TIS far from the Deſign of this Paper, to fill the Houſe of Commons with the Din and Clamour of the Nations Grievances: The Author of this is not of a complaining Spirit, nor ever was; but ſome Evils are of a Nature that force the moſt ſilent and quietly Enclin'd Pen in the World to Write. Such are the Subjects before me, and ſuch is the Juncture and critical Moment now upon us, that he who can be ſilent, muſt have very little Concern upon him for the Good of his Native Country.

I have in my humble Application to the Houſe of Commons, now ready to be aſſembled, laid before them, Three fatal Plots and Conſpiracies, of a wicked, a reſtleſs, and a revengeful Party, call'd, *The High Churchmen*, which are the Subject of the three laſt Papers. I come now to lay before your Honours the Tools they work with, the Engin they make uſe of, which diſperſes the Poiſon of their Principle, juſt as the Water-Works at *London-Bridge*, throws Water up into every Family and Houſe in the City.

Theſe Tools are, the *Pulpit*, the *Tongue*, and the *Preſs*.

The firſt of theſe is an Eccleſiaſtick Engine in its Nature, but by the Management of its proper Engineers, becomes a meer Hieroglyphick, a Politick Veſſel, adapted to the more Modern, tho' leſs Chriſtian Employments of Railing and Buffoonry

Were it not ſomething too ſerious, and the Reflection of it too melancholly, I could give my ſelf leave to be very merry with the ridiculous State-banters iſſued to the World from this Stage of *Mimick-Divinity*, and move the Houſe of Commons to ſome more than uſual Levity, to ſee how the whole Nation, and even the Honourable Aſſemblies of that Houſe, have been bugbear'd from the Pulpit, with the Harangues

and impudent Banters of the Men of the *Gown*.

But 'tis too sad a Truth to turn into such a Laughter, and tho' a *Farce* in its Nature, the Tragical Design of the Actors, merits a just Concern in me the Relator, as it does a just Resentment in the House of Commons; who, I hope, will have their Eyes open to restrain the exhorbitant Latitude of a sort of Men, who as much as in them lies, turn the Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ, *which it ought to be their Business to Preach*, to State-Projects, *Incendiarism*, and to raising Commotions in a peaceable Country, where they are not content with eating the fat of a plentiful Land, living at ease, and enjoying all the Comforts of Life; but they must prepare Destruction for their Benefactors, and labour to embroil the Country from which they receive their Bread, and by whose Bounty they grow Fat.

I am sorry to affirm to the Honourable the House of Commons, That the *Inferiour Clergy* are at this time, the dead weight against the Nation's Settlement and Prosperity; I am sorry to say they are the General Obstructors of Peaceable, Healing, and Moderate Principles; that the Railings, Exclamations and Revilings, thundred out daily against the Government, against the Constitution, and against the Queen, are to be found *both in their Practice and Original*, among these Gentlemen; That our daily Discontents are fomented, and too much raised among them, that all manner of Reconciliation among Protestants, either in Interest or Charity, is opposed by them.

Were the matter of Fact possible to be denied; nay, did I think even the Gentlemen themselves would attempt so make it a Question, I would make these Papers for a Month Current, an Index of High-Church-Problems; a Table of the Extravagancies and prodigious Venom of their Spirits in their *Pulpit*; Excursions which should carry, such a Conviction with it, that neither they nor any rational Christian for them, should be able to plead for without blushing; but I wave this, with respect to the Persons this Paper is now address'd to, whose Hours ought not to be diverted with Volumes of Particulars, but with due Respect be presented with the General Hints of the Nation's Sorrows, as Persons who can be easily let in to the Merits of a Case, and perfectly know what use is to be made of those Lights.

Again, would these Gentlemen stand forth, and tell us what Service the Fury they vent in the *Pulpit* is of, and what Tendency it has to the Publick Good, or the Propagating the Good of the Church, I wou'd still avoid the Repetition of these things.

But, *Hinc illæ Lacryma*——Here lies the true Reason of this Address; and this shall justify the Mean, Despicable Author of this Paper, in addressing to the Nation's Representative on this Account.

You have, *Gentlemen Representatives of this Nation*, innumerable Instances at your own Doors, in the several Provinces of this Kingdom from whence you come, of the Evil of this clamouring Spirit, both to the Publick Peace, and to the Church her Self.

I begin with the Church; and I refer it to the Judgment of your Honourable House in General, and to innumerable Instances ready to be given on Demand, Whether the Raillery, the Invectives, the Reflections, and the Unchristian Heat, wherewith some of our Inferiour Clergy, employ the Sacred Hour, which they ought to employ for the expounding the Scriptures, and instructing their Hearers in the Christian Religion, are not rather,

1. A Means to make the *Pulpit* Scandalous, and the Duty of the Day Burthensome and Odious to their Hearers; or,

2. To make the Truth of Religion, *which is a Gospel of Peace*, become a Herald of War, and fill Mens Minds with Wrath, Strife, Envy, and every Unpeaceable and Unchristian Principle.

3. And at last a Means to preach all the moderate, sober Christians out of the Church, and encrease the Number of *Dissenters*.

May it please your Honours to bear with Publickly Affirming, what, whenever I am call'd to it, I am ready to make it out, That in many Places of this Kingdom, through which I have lately travail'd on

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my Private Occasion; the Railing and Unpeaceable Spirit of the Clergy, lessen the Number of their Hearers, Encrease the Assembly of the *Dissenters*, both fill their Meeting-Houses, and Encrease the Numbers of them.

If these Gentlemen can please themselves, with supposing these things are of Service to the Church, their Reasons Exhibited to your Honourable House, *whom I believe, all the Nation will be content to make the Judges of that Case*, might Unfold some Mysteries, which have hitherto been conceal'd, from every bodies Understanding but their own; and which carry no Signals or Probabilities in them, to guess at their good Meaning by.

If I may be allow'd to move your Honourable House, by what I have been an Eye and Ear Witness to; I, with all imaginable freedom affirm, and am ready to descend to particualrs, both of Places and Persons.

1. That this railing of the Clergy, against their Fellow Protestants the *Dissenters*; against their own Moderate Brethren of the Church, and against the Present Moderation of the Government; tends to drive their Hearers and Parishioners, from the Service of God; and *where there are no Meetings to go to*, causes Men rather to Omit, and Avoid the Publick Assemblies; *a Thing Expressly forbid in the Scripture*, to the Great Decay of Religion; and tending to Introduce Atheism, and bring the Publick Worship of God into Contempt; and this is done, by rendring the *Pulpit* Odious and Scandalous to the People; by the Intollerable Invectives, Horrible Excitations to all manner of Inveterate Feuds, Uncharitable Heats and Animosities one against another, which the Scripture it self forbids; and Common Reasoning, *if these Gentlemen would Consider*, might inform them, cannot be grateful to the Ears of *Protestants* or *Englishmen*, who have been Taught the Doctrines of Love, Charity, Peace, Submission to Magistrates, and forbearing one another.

2. That this way of Preaching, *as they call it*, join'd with some of the Furious and Illegal Practices of the Party, of whom these Gentlemen are the too Unhappy Leaders, have so Estrang'd the People from the Church, that in many Places, Meeting-Houses are New Erected, and Large Congregations raiss'd, Settled, and Establish'd; where, had the Encumbent Preach'd the Doctrine of Peace, and according to a True Christian Minister, Discharged the Duty and Function, of a Spiritual Guide to Heaven; No such thing had been probable, or at least the Succes of it, had not been in any degree, proportion'd to the present Appearance.

The Affront done to the Government, the Insult of the Constitution, in the matter of Settlement, Tolleration, and Protestant Succession; the Personal Reproaches on the Dignify'd Clergy, and at last upon the Queen's Majesty her self; that these Gentlemen daily mix, with their Clamouring Harangues, *for I dare not call them Sermons*; require the Serious Consideration of your Honourable House, and Call aloud to you for such Redress, as Infinite Godness, shall Inspire your Hearts to think Needful.

It can never be agreeable, to a Nations Genius, as a Nation of Rational Creatures, much less as a Nation of Christians or *Englishmen*, to hear the Service of God mixt with Invectives, and Furious Railleries, against their Christian Brethren, and against their Governours; Nature, Good Manners, the Scripture and the Christian Religion know nothing of these things, and directly point out the contrary; and tho' as a *Dissenter*, I cannot call the Encrease of their Number and Meetings a National Mischief; yet I had rather see Encrease of them from any Cause, than from an Original so disasterous to the Church, whom the *Dissenters* may part from without Breach of Charity, upon the other common Differences now in Dispute; but these tend to increase in those whom it drives from the Church, a certain Abhorrence of the Church, and of the Doctrines and Practices of her Spiritual Guides.

Nor are these Railings and bitter Expressions vented against the *Dissenters* only, but against all those Reverend Ministers of the Church of *England*, who have more Charity, more Temper, more Reason, or more Manners than themselves; their Reverend Fathers the Bishops not escaping the

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Virulence and Evil Tongues of these Enflam'd Spirits, who are manifestly *set on Fire of Hell*, and diligently labour to ruine and overthrow the Church they pretend to uphold; in as much as Our Saviour himself has left it on Sacred Record, *That a House divided against it self cannot stand.*

The yet more fatal Mischief this is to the publick Peace of this Kingdom, I humbly crave Leave to lay before your Honourable House, and refer to those just Animadversions which I have no Reason to doubt will be made in their due time on the Violences, Divisions, Fightings, and Intolerable Disorders committed on both Sides in several Parts of this Nation in the late Elections; Things which cry aloud to your Honourable House for Justice, and which make the Nation impatiently wait for that Redress; *which all their Grievances hope to find in* the Impartial Proceedings of your Assembly.

As to the Gentlemen themselves, tho' they take especial Care *not to be Conceal'd*, yet I avoid Descending to particular Persons, Wishing rather to see the Crime, than the Persons Censur'd in Parliament, in Charity to their Persons; humbly hoping, that being once Discourag'd, by the Concurring Judgment of the whole Nation, Express'd from your Mouths; they will, *tho' it be late*, Consider what they are doing, and what Mischiefs they are laying the Foundation of in the Nation; Beseeching them, that in meer Respect to the Character they bear, and to the Blushes they ought to appear with, they would not Force me to the Unhappy Necessity of Naming Names, and Defending the Justice of this Terrible Charge, by entring into the Odious Particulars; things much fitter to be Buried in Eternal Forgetfulness; Things I sincerely Pray Heaven would both forgive them, and move them to Reform, as being Scandalous to their Profession, Hateful to God and Man; Ungrateful to their Patrons and Benefactors, Odious to their Hearers; a Perverting the Doctrine of the Gospel, and Work of the Ministry; a Disgrace to the *Protestant Religion*, and Destructive to the whole Nation.

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